

State legislature has embraced these lies and conspiracy theories about election fraud to propose a raft of new laws that would make it more difficult for eligible voters to actually vote. We have an opportunity to put an end to these anti-democratic tactics and Congress must seize it.

Today, the Senate will take a crucial vote on the Freedom to Vote Act, important legislation that is necessary to ensure that our government remains by the people and for the people, not politicians.

Similar to the For the People Act, which the House has passed both this term and last, the Freedom to Vote Act sets basic nationwide standards for how elections are conducted and ensures that the voices of everyday American voters are heard in Washington. It will work in tandem with the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to restore critical protections of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and combat racial discrimination in voting. Together, these two bills will safeguard our democracy from both current and future threats.

Ultimately, the Freedom to Vote Act is about ensuring that people, not politicians, hold the power in our government.

Let's talk for a moment about what this bill is and what it isn't. The Freedom to Vote Act would set national standards to protect the freedom to vote, end partisan redistricting, ensure sound election administration, and fix our broken campaign finance system.

These key provisions are widely supported by the American people, including majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. People are tired of cycles of chaos, followed by inaction, when it comes to our elections. The most basic foundational element of our democracy deserves to be treated with seriousness, urgency, and care. We cannot stand by as discriminatory voter laws, partisan gerrymandering, and dark money drown out the voices of American voters.

As for what this bill does not do, contrary to what some of our colleagues across the aisle—and particularly MITCH MCCONNELL—have claimed, the Freedom to Vote Act is not an unconstitutional power grab.

Our Founding Fathers may not have anticipated all the ways our country would change over the centuries and the ways in which we would need to adapt, but they were really, really good in anticipating the evil that men might do in pursuit of power, including anticipating efforts to undermine the most precious value enshrined in the Constitution, the right to a government chosen by, for, and of the people.

One of the ways the Framers did this was in Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution, which allowed States, in general, to regulate the time, place, and manner of elections to Federal offices, like Congress, but with a really important exception. The second half of that section says, "Congress may at any

time make or alter such State regulations."

Why did the Framers do this? Because they already knew of instances in which State legislators might try to corrupt the election process in order to impact the Federal Government, even as they were drafting the Constitution. And isn't that where we are today?

We have States that are trying to make it harder for people who live in cities and people of color to vote. We have State legislatures proposing to overturn the results of the last election and future elections if the party in power in that State doesn't like the candidate that the people voted for.

We have State legislatures proposing to politicize professional election staff and procedures with bills that would allow partisan legislatures to overthrow the Presidential electors chosen by the people and substitute electors who will vote for another candidate.

That is why it is so important that Congress act to fulfill what may be its most sacred obligation under the Constitution to protect the right of the American people to choose their own representatives rather than letting elected officials manipulate that process to stay in power.

If the Senate again fails to fulfill its responsibility with the filibuster intact, then it is time for the filibuster to go.

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INFLATION AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind Congress that small businesses and consumers all over the country are feeling the repercussions of President Biden's spending spree.

It is very simple: President Biden's so-called rescue plan has directly caused a crisis we are seeing on the farm and on Main Street. Injecting \$1.9 trillion of government spending into the economy without a clear plan for execution has increased costs and disrupted the supply chain.

All government spending must be paid for somehow, and Americans are paying for it with inflation. Since February 2020, the amount of money in the economy has grown by over 26 percent, so it should come as no surprise that Americans are experiencing the highest price increases since the Great Recession. Consumer prices for used cars and trucks have risen by more than 24 percent, and costs have increased 11.2 percent for furniture, 9.6 percent for household appliances, 6 percent for utilities, and 5.6 percent for clothing.

President Biden promised to raise taxes only on wealthy Americans, but these price increases happening under his direction are a tax on every American. Inflation-adjusted wages are down nearly 2 percent since President Biden

took office, and with the Democrats planning to continue their reckless tax-and-spend habits, American families can expect the cost of living to keep going up.

As if rising costs weren't enough, this administration's so-called rescue plan has created a labor shortage that is weakening our supply chain and leaving manufacturers and business owners high and dry.

Earlier this month, I hosted a manufacturing tour across my district in Kansas, where I visited small businesses that produce and sell products like highway signs, car accessories, and industrial valves. These businesses are the driving forces in their communities, but the leaders who run them all painted the same bleak picture: Vendor costs are rising; labor is hard to come by; and a weakened supply chain is slowing everything down.

The Grasshopper Company in Moundridge, Kansas, builds and sells mowers and landscaping tools, the same ones used by the White House groundskeepers. Grasshopper is facing longer lead times on vendor items than they have ever seen, and the prices on raw materials like steel seem to be rising daily. To meet their customer demand on time, Grasshopper had to pay an extra \$28,000 air freight fee. Back in July, Grasshopper's disrupted supply chain and increased cost of doing business forced them to raise the price of their goods midseason, something they have not had to do since the Carter administration.

Another manufacturing company in my district told me that the supply chain backlog has made it impossible to plan for their future. Their suppliers are telling them that essential inputs like electronic components will now take at least 5 to 6 months before they even ship. Before this year, they never had to wait longer than 4 weeks.

Sadly, these are just two examples from Kansas' Big First District. Small businesses all over the country are being forced to raise their costs due to supply chain issues, inflation impacting their own inputs, labor shortages, or all the above.

To get inflation under control, strengthen the supply chain, and stop consumer costs from rising even further, we need to get Americans back to work, stop the vaccine mandate, quit recklessly printing money, and end the spending addiction here in Washington.

SECURING RELEASE AND RETURN OF AMERICAN MISSIONARIES IN HAITI

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express the urgent need for the Biden administration to secure the release and return of the 17 American missionaries taken captive in Haiti by a street gang known for mass kidnapping of religious groups.

I cannot imagine the terror they are experiencing in this very moment as we speak. We cannot sit idly by while they fear for their lives.

For decades, the United States has invested in developing Haiti through

government aid and nongovernment organizations like Christian Aid Ministries. I urge President Biden and this administration to leverage our relationship with the Haitian Government to secure the safe return of every member of this group.

The captivity of Americans, whether in Port-au-Prince, Kabul, or anywhere else, is an international crisis. President Biden's actions in this moment are assuredly being watched by those who would not hesitate to do our country harm and could have longstanding repercussions for Americans practicing their faith across the globe.

The United States must be clear: If you capture our citizens, our government will respond swiftly and decisively.

EXTENDING CHILD TAX CREDIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. School supplies, gas for the car, swimming lessons, payment for rent, these are just a few of the ways my constituents in southeast Louisiana are spending their child tax credit payments. Especially as my community recovers from Hurricane Ida and has unexpected costs, the dependability of monthly child tax credits—an average of \$410 for my constituents—has meant a lot.

While this program expires at the end of December, the problems facing American children and families will not. The Build Back Better Act includes provisions to continue this program.

Studies show that extending the child tax credit permanently is sound economic policy and that it can be done better to have better healthcare, better health outcomes, and more economic opportunities for families.

We need to put our money where our mouth is and invest in our children, invest in our families, and pass the Build Back Better Act.

REMEMBERING MUSICIAN BENNIE PETE

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 has taken over 725,000 lives. One person gone too soon that I want to highlight is Bennie Pete, a New Orleans jazz musician. He passed away at the age of 45 from complications of COVID-19, shortly after deciding to get his first vaccine shot.

Bennie played the tuba and co-founded the celebrated Hot 8 Brass Band. Born in the Upper Ninth Ward, he helped found the band by the age of 18. They played on street corners, parades, and funerals, and then at bars and bigger venues, and as second lines.

When Hurricane Katrina hit, Hot 8 brought music to the city in a way that only New Orleans can in the challenging days after the storm, playing at evacuation shelters and medical centers. The band became local heroes, a sense of hope, a sense of energy in the days immediately following great despair.

The Hot 8 grew in popularity, touring in Europe and playing at Tipitina's and the Jazz and Heritage Festival.

New Orleans will never be the same. We have lost a little bit of our soul with the passing of Bennie Pete. May he rest in peace.

IMPROVING LOUISIANA'S ENVIRONMENT AND INDUSTRY

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, Louisiana's Second Congressional District includes an industrial corridor of nearly 150 oil refineries, plastic plants, and chemical facilities. Many sites provide high-paying jobs that lift families out of poverty or build a better life. But it is, foremost, a place that my constituents call home.

As their Congressman, it is my job to make sure that it is a safe and prosperous place to live. Sadly, there have been longstanding concerns over elevated and disproportionate rates of cancer and respiratory conditions in this region. It shouldn't be this way. Industry and community can coexist, with proper monitoring and regulation.

That is why I am calling on EPA Administrator Regan for Federal assistance to study, monitor, and improve the impacts of emissions and polluting substances in the river parishes. No one should have to die for their job.

I stand ready to bring both environmental stewardship and a robust economy to Louisiana. We can do this. We must do this.

RECOGNIZING BRAS FOR A CAUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

As a physician, and also as a member of our society and country and the female gender, we are all familiar with the amazing work the Komen Foundation and Komen Race for the Cure have done to raise awareness, education, and research in breast cancer.

I would like to take the time to recognize an extraordinary group in my district that has found a creative way to help underserved women in the Ottumwa community receive annual mammogram screenings and breast ultrasounds.

Founded in 2011 by two-time breast cancer survivor and River Hills Community Health Center nurse Laurie Hornback, Bras for a Cause is an annual fundraising event held in Hedrick, Iowa, where donated and decorated bras are modeled by local firefighters and auctioned off. Over the past 10 years, the event has raised a total of \$174,000 to help women receive breast cancer screenings or treatment.

This year, Bras for a Cause raised a total of \$27,000, and they will be donating \$15,000 to help Ottumwa women receive breast cancer screenings at River Hills Community Health Center in

Ottumwa. Additionally, a portion of the remaining funds was donated to the Mahaska Health Partnership, while the rest is being saved to help women currently diagnosed with breast cancer undergo treatment.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Laurie and Bras for a Cause for coming together to put on this fantastic event and for their service to our community.

RECOGNIZING SARA RUSSELL, IOWA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a teacher from my district who recently received a prestigious Iowa award for her work to inspire the next generation.

Last week, Sara Russell, who has been teaching social studies for nearly 20 years at Pleasant Valley High School in Bettendorf, was awarded the Department of Education's 2022 Teacher of the Year Award by Governor Kim Reynolds.

The Iowa Teacher of the Year Award was established in 1958 to recognize educators who go above and beyond to motivate and inspire students to achieve at their highest levels.

Sara was selected for this award for her leadership in helping students build life skills while also being a mentor for new teachers in the Pleasant Valley School District.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Sara and all educators who work to inspire the next generation of American leaders and make Iowa the best place to learn, live, work, and raise a family.

RECOGNIZING ERIC VANDER VELDEN

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to share a story about educators in my district literally going the extra mile to ensure their students' success.

For the last few months, the Newton School District in Jasper County has reported a shortage of bus drivers, leaving many parents and students uncertain about how they would be able to make it to school each morning. In a rural area, our bus transportation to school is extremely important.

With the importance of education and safety in mind, Eric Vander Velden, a physical education teacher in the Newton School District, answered the call for help by driving a school bus when needed. This is part of a larger effort by the Newton staff, in concert with parents, to do whatever they can to help their students succeed.

It is stories like these that remind us that our teachers are the backbone of this country, and I couldn't be more confident in our future, knowing that the next generation is in their capable hands.

HONORING THOMAS STRAYER NELSON'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Thomas